

# Tragedy to triumph

Literature



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Julia Klein Mr. Tuz History Block 3 23 October 2012 Tragedy to Triumph There has been no greater, more unforgettable tragedy in America's modern history than what took place on September 11, 2001. It was a horrifying day that ended 2,996 lives: 2,977 victims and 19 hijackers, but eventually created a new beginning of change for the better of the nation (The 9/11 Commission Report). A decade after the 9/11 attacks reshaped several facets of life in America. Life and travel in America has changed significantly over the past decade (Shanty).

As an immediate response for our nation's safety, there were some temporary changes made, while other changes have resulted in lasting transformations of our country (Villemez). A traumatizing day for many, 9/11 created a national burden of prejudice, brought about much needed changes of transforming our travel, and altered our government, which all eventually helped strengthen America. Obviously, not all of the changes that resulted from the September 11th tragedy were beneficial to the nation, especially the Anti-Islam Sentiment that was developed (Jamil).

America's 2.6 million Muslims have constantly found themselves facing resentment and hostility during the years after 9/11 (9/11: 'The Day the World Changed'). Some Americans had responded to the September 11 terrorist attacks with extreme terror, as well as a growing intolerance against people who were, or simply just appeared to be from the Middle East. Immediately after the attacks, the government searched for suspects internationally, and numerous Muslims in the U. S. reported that they were the victims of hate crimes and harassment (Villemez).

After the attacks, Islamic violence in America increased greatly. According to the FBI, 28 hate crimes in 2000 were found to be anti-Islamic, while that number rose rapidly to 481, and remains above 100 a decade later (The 9/11 Commission Report). There has also been a significant growth of religious division and public distrust of Muslims in America (9/11: 'The Day the World Changed'). "The perception many Americans share today is that "terrorism" and "Islam" are synonymous. This is not true, because those terrorists are not true Muslims, and do not represent

Islam, any more than the KKK represented Christianity. Unfortunately, people's ignorance has led many to shape a negative attitude about Islam," Basir Jamil shares his disappointed perspective on the hot topic of Anti-Islam Sentiment (Jamil). Jamil was born in America, but has a Pakistan background. Throughout his childhood, he has personally encountered racism and extremism that resulted from 9/11. He said he "endured snide comments, people calling me "terrorist," and people generally hating me for no reason but my race and religion" (Jamil).

Though it is accurate that concerns about extremism involving a tiny minority are justified, as a few of the terrorist plots since 9/11 did involve Muslim citizens who purposely tried to harm the United States, it is also equally believed that the larger community of American Muslims has. Throughout the last decade, there has been a gravely unjust burden of prejudice and misunderstanding in America. Another immediate change, which occurred as a result of 9/11, was to take new measures of safety in our Nation's security. Most of the security changes after the attacks took place in the airports (Villemez).

A couple months after the attacks, Congress passed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. This created the Transportation Security Administration that secures all transportation systems and insures air travel safety (Johnstone). The TSA implemented new procedures, which included more rigid guidelines on screening. After 9/11 as new threats were being discovered, new procedures were being introduced including removing shoes and banning all liquids. Airplanes also underwent major changes including fortified cockpit doors becoming more common, and less first-class cabin curtains being used by many airlines (Villemez).

Pilots can now become a federal flight deck officer by applying, which gives them the right to carry a gun and serve as a federal officer. In order to compensate for the extra security costs, a "Sept. 11 fee" was added onto passengers' tickets. The TSA has collected nearly \$15 billion over nine years (Shanty). Besides air travel, railways and mass transit systems now have checkpoint regulations that allow law enforcement to randomly search personal property and bags. Also random stops at major tunnels were greatly increased to include checkpoint searches at the discretion of law enforcement (Johnstone).

The improvement of security in travels shows the tremendous impact of 9/11, but it also is clearly evident in the policies adopted by the U. S. government immediately after the tragedy (Villemez). Former President George W. Bush passed a considerable amount of U. S. legislation to strengthen U. S. National Security (The 9/11 Commission Report). The Patriot Act may be the most obvious piece of legislation relating to Sept. 11. In the

2002, there were more than 130 pieces of 9/11-related legislation introduced in the 107th Congress, with 48 bills and resolutions signed into law.

The Patriot Act made it easier for law enforcement agencies to search telephone, medical and financial records (Villemez). Along with the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, they included the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act. This required the State Department and Immigration to exchange visa and immigrant data with each other (Shanty). According to The Washington Post, there were 263 government organizations created following the attacks. Government agencies created after 9/11 included the Department of Homeland Security.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 combined over 200 government agencies including the TSA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Guard, and the Secret Service (The 9/11 Commission Report). The government plays a very significant role in our nation, and played their role well by closing most of the holes of insecurity effectively. A decade is a lengthy time, but perhaps not quite long enough for a country to bounce back from the biggest terrorist attack on its soil. Security measures have been extended, but Americans are still feeling the impact of what happened on that early fall day.

Though this incident caused a lasting legacy of terror in many, it also brought America closer as one nation (Villemez). " Instead of turning us against each other, tragedy has brought us together. (...) This country was built as a beacon of freedom and tolerance. That's what's made us strong, now and forever," Obama says as he realizes the affect of 9/11 on the country, and the importance of the nation moving forward as one nation and

one people (The 9/11 Commission Report). Instead of pulling back from the world, our alliances have been strengthened while security at home has tremendously improved.

America now has a renewed sense of pride and unity (9/11: 'The Day the World Changed'). People have begun to realize just how precious every moment we have in life is and how fortunate we are to live in a country that gives us the freedom to live as we please. This day will never be forgotten, lives were lost, lessons were learned, and a stronger America has emerged.

Works Consulted " 9/11: 'The Day the World Changed'. " Issue Focus. Sept. 11 2002: n. p. SIRS Government Reporter. Web. 20 Oct 2012. Jamil, Basir. " Growing up Muslim after 9/11. " Baltimore Sun. N. p. 12 Sept. 2010. Web. 21 Oct. 2012. Johnstone, R. William. " Not Safe Enough: Fixing Transportation Security. " Issues in Science and Technology Vol. XXIII No. 2. Winter 2007: 51-60. SIRS Issues Researcher. Web. 20 Oct 2012. Shanty, Frank. " Ten Years on Background. " American History. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. 11 Sept. 2012. The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. New York: Norton, 2004. Print. Villemez, Jason, and Dalia Mortada. " 9/11 to Now: Ways We Have Changed. " PBS. PBS, 14 Sept. 2011. Web. 21 Oct. 2012.